

What is claimed is:

1. A system, comprising:  
a fluorescent lamp;  
first means for providing electrical energy to the lamp to produce a first range  
5 of brightness; and  
second means for providing electrical energy to the lamp to produce a second  
range of brightness, where the lamp operates in the glow discharge mode.

2. A system as set forth in claim 1, further comprising means for  
10 switching between the first and second means for providing electrical energy.

3. A system as set forth in claim 1, where the second means for providing  
electrical energy comprises a source of pulse-width modulated bipolar voltage or  
current of a level sufficient to maintain the operation of the lamp in the glow discharge  
15 mode.

4. A system as set forth in claim 3 where the bipolar voltage or current  
is a low frequency square wave signal.

5. A system as set forth in claim 1, where the first and second ranges of  
20 brightness overlap.

6. A low brightness supply for a fluorescent lamp, comprising a source  
of pulse-width modulated bipolar voltage or current of a level sufficient to maintain  
25 the operation of the lamp in the glow discharge mode.

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7. A low brightness supply as set forth in claim 6 where the bipolar voltage or current is a low frequency square wave signal.

8. A power supply system for a fluorescent lamp, comprising:  
a first power supply for providing electrical energy to the lamp to produce a first range of brightness, where the first power supply comprises a source of high-frequency voltage or current;

10 a second power supply for providing electrical energy to the lamp to produce a second range of brightness, where the second means for providing electrical energy comprises a source of low-frequency, pulse-width modulated bipolar voltage or current of a level sufficient to maintain the operation of the lamp in the glow discharge mode; and

a switch for switching between the first and second power supplies.

09135185-081798

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